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SUBJECT: TURKEY: IRAQI INTERNATIONAL FAIR IN GAZIANTEP

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1. (U) Summary: The first Iraqi International Fair was held in Gaziantep on June 7-11, with the goal of increasing economic and trade relations between Turkey and Iraq, as well as among other countries in the region. With high-level business and government participation from Turkey, Iraq and other countries surrounding Turkey, the fair received guardedly positive reviews, and raised hopes of increasing Gaziantep's exports to neighboring countries by as much as 50 percent. End summary.

2. (U) AmCon Adana officers attended the opening ceremony of the Iraqi International Fair, jointly organized by the Iraqi Ministry of Trade; Gaziantep Chamber of Industry; the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges; and the Turkish Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade, on June 7, 2006 in Gaziantep. The fair ended on June 11. Among the attendees at the official opening ceremony were Turkish State Minister in charge of Foreign Trade Kursat Tuzmen; Turkish Minister of Industry and Commerce Ali Cokkun; Turkish Minister of Public Works Faruk Nafiz Ozak; Georgian Minister of Economy and Development Irakli Chogovadze; Iraqi Commercial Counselor Adnan Al Sharif; Iraqi Cultural Counselor Jaber Al Jabiri; Syrian Minister of Public Works Hamud Al-Husayn; representatives of chambers of industry and commerce from neighboring provinces as well as Northern Cyprus.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OPENING ADDRESSES

12. (U) In their opening addresses, the chairmen of Gaziantep Chambers of Industry and Commerce emphasized their hopes that the fair would develop economic relations between Turkey and Iraq, and asserted that Turks and Iraqis were the real owners of the Middle East. The speakers emphasized Gaziantep's pioneering role in developing these regional trade relations. Iraqi Commercial Counselor Adnan Al-Sharif pointed out that foreign investors had doubts about investing in Iraq because of the turmoil in that country, but he assured listeners that the north, south and middle parts of the country were safe. Iraqi Cultural Counselor Jaber Al Jabiri praised Turkey's democratic progress, and asserted that Iraq and other countries neighboring Turkey would like to follow Turkey's democratic example. Turkish

State Minister in charge of Foreign Trade Kursat Tuzmen said that the fair organizers planned to hold the fair in Gaziantep every year, and hoped that Gaziantep could play a more active role in international trade in the region.

PROFILE OF SECTORS AND PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

13. (U) Number of participating companies by country

Country	Quantity	
Turkey	508	
Italy		1
China		3
Northern Cyprus	11	
Czech Republic	1	
India		1
Egypt		3
Croatia	1	
Australia		1
Syria		2
Iran		3
Jordan	2	
Iraq		1

14. (U) This was not a specialist fair. All kinds of products were exhibited by participant companies, varying from confection to heavy construction machinery. The sectors covered included construction machinery, automotive and related industries, energy, electricity, electronics, telecommunication and information, food and food processing technologies, educational tools and equipment, consumer durables, hygiene and cosmetics, textiles and apparel.

We noticed that there were no companies from the US represented

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at the fair. The Turkish-French Trade Association, and the Turkish-Italian Chamber had booths at the fair. According to the organizers, a total of 65,000 people visited the fairgrounds during the event; 11,000 people from other cities in Turkey, and 7,000 people from Iraq, Syria, and other countries.

INCREASED TRADE WITH THE REGION

15. (U) The Iraqi International Fair can be seen as the latest expression of Turkey's efforts within its strategy since the early 2000's to increase trade with surrounding countries. As part of this strategy, Turkey specifically hopes to take advantage of Iraq's high rate of demand for nearly all kinds of goods and services to increase its exports with Iraq.

16. (U) Fair organizers did not anticipate that the fair would bring a rise in exports in the short term. Nevertheless, Gaziantep companies are reportedly optimistic that the fair may help create gradual growth in trade between Turkey and Iraq, as well as other neighboring countries. On the other hand, a group of businessmen from Adana's textile sector who visited the fair complained that they were unable to meet any Iraqi companies. During a visit on the second day of the fair, Iraqi Minister of Commerce Abdulfarah El Sudany explained that Iraqi companies' and ministries' plans were still at the early stages of preparation, and indicated that he expected greater participation by Iraqi companies in the future. The Gaziantep Chamber of Industry announced that it hoped to see the fair held in Gaziantep next year, and that the Chamber was hoping to see a rise in the percentage of Gaziantep's exports to its neighbors of up to 50 percent.

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